



CONSUMER ALERT

Local Number Portability Is Available

The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) reminds consumers that Local Number Portability (LNP) is now available in several areas in Michigan. While wireline to wireline LNP has been available in most areas of Michigan for several years, wireless customers now can take advantage of the same service. LNP allows phone customers to change wireline or cellular phone carriers within the same geographic area while keeping the same phone number. This process is called “porting” your number.

Before You Change Providers

As with all new services, it is beneficial to be an informed consumer prior to making the change to a new carrier. There are several points to keep in mind when considering whether to port your telephone number to a new carrier.

- Currently, in Michigan, LNP is available in the Grand Rapids-Muskegon-Holland and greater Detroit/Ann Arbor areas. The best way to determine if a telephone carrier is currently offering LNP – and in which specific areas – is to call the carrier directly. LNP will be available throughout Michigan by mid-2004.
- Although LNP allows for the switch from one carrier to another within the same geographic area, it will not allow you to keep the same phone number when moving to a new geographic area. Your calling area may change and calls that were local calls may become long-distance to the caller.
- LNP also allows consumers to port a phone number from a wireline (standard land-line) phone to a wireless phone. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC), the federal agency that mandated implementation of LNP, requires wireline carriers to port phone numbers to wireless carriers in cases where the wireless carrier’s coverage area (the area in which wireless service can be received from that carrier) overlaps the area in which the wireline phone number is assigned. Check with your prospective wireless carrier to see if wireline-to-wireless porting is available to you.
- If you port from wireline phone service to wireless, your wireline long distance carrier will not move with you. Your long distance service will generally be provided by your new wireless carrier. Verify this with the wireless carrier before making the switch. Be sure to cancel your old long-distance service if it is provided with your new wireless carrier.



- If you switch carriers before your contract expires, your old carrier will generally charge you an early termination fee. Check your current contract before you switch to see if an early termination fee applies.
- The FCC permits wireless carriers to recover the costs of implementing LNP by assessing fees to all their customers. These fees may appear as a monthly line item on your wireless bill. A wireless carrier may also charge you an additional fee when you request to port your number. Although the FCC does not regulate the amount of such fees, all such charges must be just and reasonable. Before you decide to port your number, check with your wireless carrier to see if any fees for porting will be charged.

- Depending on your new carrier's network and service features, you may need to purchase a different phone. Wireless phones purchased from one carrier are often incompatible with another carrier or are locked so they cannot be used with different service providers. Check with your prospective carrier prior to switching. Also, verify if any enhanced services you want, such as Caller ID, are available before switching.
- The FCC has not set a specific, mandatory time frame for a porting process to be completed nor does it regulate the time frame. However, the wireless industry has agreed upon a two and a half hour time frame to complete a simple port from one wireless carrier to another. A wireline to wireless port could take longer to complete – up to several days. Contact the new carrier for an explanation of the process and an estimate on how long it will take.
- During the time a number is being ported from the old carrier to the new carrier, *Enhanced 911* wireless service (E911) may be affected. If you call 911 during this period, the call should go through. However, the 911 operator may not be able to call you back if the call gets disconnected.
- If you port from a wireline to wireless service, your telephone number listing will be removed from the database that supports 4-1-1 information services and most published telephone directories – both printed and online. However, wireless providers have announced they will be publishing cellular telephone numbers.
- If you port from a wireline to wireless service, Internet service (dial-up or high-speed DSL) will generally not be available.

To Change Providers

After you have reviewed the information and made a decision to port your number to a new carrier, contact the prospective new carrier before you terminate your existing service. Have your phone number, billing address, account number, and latest bill available. **Do not terminate your current service with your existing carrier before initiating service with a prospective new carrier.** The new carrier will handle the transaction with your old carrier. You should receive a final bill from your old carrier. If you do not receive one within 30 days, contact both carriers to verify the service was switched.

As with all contractual relationships, be sure you understand the terms and conditions of your new contract before agreeing to it.

To Get More Information or File a Complaint

For more information on LNP, visit the FCC's Web site at:

- www.fcc.gov/cgb/NumberPortability/, or
- Call 1.888.225.5322 (voice) or 1.888.835.5322 (TTY)

Complaints can be filed by:

- E-mail at fccinfo@fcc.gov, or
- The web at www.fcc.gov/cgb/complaints.html, or
- Call the above toll-free numbers

For wireline to wireless porting complaints, you can also contact the MPSC:

- The web at www.michigan.gov/mpsc
- Call 1-800-292-9555